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Dear Senator Casperson (Tom):

I would like to express support for the direction you have taken with SJR O and SB 763, which I consider to be one of the most-significant legislative initiatives of this session. Ensuring that the Natural Resources Trust Fund and the State Parks Endowment Fund are both appropriately used as the citizens of this state intended when they voted to enshrine these funds into the Constitution is a significant and important step.

I have reviewed the latest versions of both SJR O and SB 763 and appreciate the steps you have taken to remove the language that had the potential to impact the Board's evaluation of funding for trails based on their uses as either motorized or non-motorized. In our conversation yesterday, we both agreed that motorized and non-motorized trails should be on the same level playing field and be evaluated on their respective merits.

In addition, I also appreciate your apparent support for narrowing how funds can be used to address invasive species problems. I believe that an important principle behind the use of these funds is that investments should be made in programs that provide enduring impact and benefit. I understand that this is a critical issue for a variety of reasons and am hopeful that we can get to the language that narrows this use. Tying the use of the funds to a specific recreation project is a great approach and helps to focus the kind of projects that can be funded.

One issue that we must continue to watch carefully is how the proposal impacts long term funding of our state parks. I understand that there may be some differing opinions on the fiscal impact and am hopeful that we can all arrive at the same conclusion when the DNR presents their analysis.

I am ready to continue to work with you in moving this package forward with these important changes in mind and want to applaud you for your efforts and your commitment to ensuring the NRTF continues to be one of the most-fundamental vehicles for conservation efforts in this state.

Bob Wilson
Executive Director
Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance

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